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ABSTRACT

Since the Imperial decree in 1974, Iran has been engaged in implementing an educational policy which promotes equal educational opportunities for all its children. On the primary level, free education and one free meal daily has created an increase in enrollments in rural areas. Religious minorities, who receive free education, are allowed to operate their own institutions under government protection. All educational planning, curriculum development, and publication and distribution of books for pre-university education are centralized under the Ministry of Education. However, local councils are encouraged to participate in educational administration. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education oversees all higher education, although curriculum is developed by university faculty. Recent changes in the structure of Iranian education include a division of secondary education into science/mathematics and human sciences in the first year, followed by three years of math/physics, science, culture and literature, or economics and social studies. Admission to universities involves a competetive national entrance exam, consideration of secondary school grades, and, for some universities, personal interviews.
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INSTITUTE FOR RESEARCH AND PLANNING IN SCIENCE AND EDUCATION
(I. R. P. S. E.)
TEHERAN, IRAN

IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT OF IRAN

Educational Developments during the years

1974 to 1976

Report presented to

The Thirty-Sixth International Conference of Education

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Geneva, September 1977

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a. Introduction

Since the Imperial Decree in 1974, Iran has been engaged in implementing an educational policy which promotes equal opportunities for all its children. In an effort to facilitate and accelerate the introduction of compulsory general education, significant steps have been taken at every level. The two most important of these steps are provision for free education, and for free meals.

In response to the Shahanshah's decree, the government of Iran has assumed responsibility for the educational expenses of all students in public schools, and by special arrangement, for the fees of some private school students as well. So that universal compulsory education might be more expeditiously implemented at the primary and guidance levels, government support is provided without any reciprocal committment by the students. But in secondary and higher education, students who benefit from free tuition commit themselves to work either for a government organization or for free enterprise for a period equal to twice the length of their benefits.

The Imperial Decree also made the government responsible for providing one free meal each school day to all children in all primary and guidance level schools in Iran. As was anticipated, this decision resulted in persuading a great number of children from poorer and working class families to attend classes.

As a result of these and other policies, the percentage of students attending school from rural areas increased and the number of drop-outs declined. During the years since the decree, the annual increase has exceeded normal expectations until the actual figures reached 300,000 in the school year 1975-1976. In

this growth, the number of girls increased at a faster rate than that of the boys, although by law, girls and boys enjoy equal educational opportunities at all levels. In spite of this, however, traditional attitudes and social mores have prevented many girls and women from assuming their rightful place in both the educational system and in society itself. For its part, the Iranian government has taken delibreate legal, social and economic actions to encourage women to participate in the socio-economic side of life.

Religious minorities have not been overlooked in educational planning. They also enjoy free education and operate their own institutions under government protection. On the other hand, there is no legal obstacle to students of any religious group enrolling in any school in the country, public or private.

b. Administrative system of education in Iran

Iranian system of education has been heavily centralized in the past but active steps have been taken in the recent years to decentralize the administrative machinery of education. Offices of the Regional Deputy Ministers of education have been abolished and their responsibilities have been entrusted to the regional educational authorities. The area of activity of the regional education departments and their heads has been expanded to cover many aspects of all pre-university education.

In an effort to encourage people's particiapation local councils have been established which comprise of locally elected

people. Gradually, their powers in dealing with the educational issues have been increased, especially in the field of administration of education. In some areas even decision making has also been entrusted to the local councils.

However, educational planning, curriculum development and publication and distribution of books at all stages of pre-university education are still highly centralized and these activities are handled by the Head Office of Ministry of Education.

All institutions of higher education fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. The organization of this ministry has also been reviewed and ammended over this period of two years. Offices of the Deputy Ministers were reorganized and an alternative organization was to have replaced the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of higher education. As the proposed organization has still not been finalised the Boards of Trustees still function as they used to.

To provide the main guidelines on the educational policies there are various councils. Right at the top is the Imperial Council on Education formed less than two years ago. This councial is chaired by the Emperor himself and the Empress is its Vice-chairman. The Imperial Council lays down the broader policy guidelines for the whole field of education.

Amongst the other important councils are the High council of Education, mainly for the area of education covered by the Ministry of Education; and the Central Council of Universities and other Institutions of Higher Education, and the Council for Higher Education Development. The former of these two bodies is a co-

ordinating body but almost ineffective in imposing its recommendations. Another very influential body is the annual Conference on the Evaluation of Educational Revolution, commonly known as the Ramsar Conference. This conference is Chaired by his Imperial Majesty himself and in the past its recommendations resulted in the form of resolutions. But since the formation of the Imperial Council on Education the Ramsar Conference only makes policy proposals subject to the approval by the Imperial Council. Then there are many councils which specialise in specific areas and are affiliated with their respective ministries.

At the institutions of higher education more definite policy decisions are made by their Boards of Trustees such as on finance, budget, management and administration. The academic policy, however, is the responsibility of the academic staff of these institutions.

Financial estimates for education are included in the national development plans and according to the allocations the budgets are paid annually both to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education. But each university and institution of higher education has its separate budget which is approved by the Plan and Budget Organization. Table "1" shows the distribution of budget allocation to education under various categories for the year 1974-75 and 1975-76.

Note:

At the change of government and appointment of a new cabinet in August 77 the two ministries, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education, have been merged into one. This new organization is expected to bring about a greater degree of coordination in the whole field of education. The structure of the new ministry and the process of merger are now under study.

c. Structure and Organization of the Education system in Iran

Within the framework of the new education system introduced a few years ago, more radical changes have been initiated over the past two years, especially in the structure of secondary general and vocational education. One year of vocational guidance after the Guidance Cycle was eliminated. In general secondary education, three years of general education which was followed by one year of various specialized courses has now been replaced by two main branches: 'Science and Mathematics' and 'Human Sciences' in the first year and then these two branches are subdivided into four branches: Mathematics-physics, Science, culture and literature, economics and social studies. These four branches started in the second year are continued for the remaining three years of the secondary cycle. Provision has also been made for transfer from one branch to another on passing certain examinations.

Examination at the end of the primary cycle is held and controlled nationally, but the examination at the end of the Guidance Cycle is a regional examination, and at the end of the secondary stage the examinations are again national. Written question papers are prepared by the head office of examinations and are then passed on to the Regional Education Departments. Correction of written papers and the oral examinations are held at the regional boards.

Admissions to higher education institutions are on competitive basis. All applicants for admission participate in the national entrance examination, commonly known as 'Concours'. Until two years ago, passing of the national entrance examination ensured a cadidate a place in higher education, but over the past two years along with the success in the competitive examination candidates' secondary

school examination record is also taken into consideration. In addition some institutions hold their own interviews for the candidates and thereby enjoy some power in the selection of their students.

The student selection method is still in experimental stage and it is hoped that a more just method of selection would be evolved in future.

The American type of credit and semester system has been introduced in recent years in higher education. Each semester consists of 16 class sessions and each session runs for two hours, accounting for two credits.

The academic year for all levels of education commences on the first day of autumn, i.e., 23rd of September throughout Iran, and concludes on the last day of spring on 21st of June.

During the academic year at primary and secondary level examinations are held three times a year and at the Guidance Cycle level four examinations are held annually. However, at the higher education level examinations are held at the end of each semester in the subjects taken during the semester.

d. Curriculum Development

For all pre-university education curriculum is developed centrally by the Ministry of Education and appropriate books and other teaching materials are prescribed. But at the level of higher education curriculum is developed by the faculty at these institutions and, therefore, scope for any innovations in curriculum is increased at the departmental level.

e. Teacher Training

Teachers and other staff for the education system are trai by different institutions. These institutions are as follows:

1. Daneshserai-Moghademati (Teacher training Colleg for primary education). Students are taken at these c from amongst those who have completed ten years of sch for a period of two years. These institutions are ful residential. Those who complete the two-year course a certified to teach at primary schools.

2. Daneshserai-Ashayeri This institute is responsi training teachers for nomad tribes and the candidates chosen only from amongst the tribes. Candidates must completed the primary school. The one year full-time- is fully residential, and on completion the teachers a certified to teach at tribal primary schools.

3. Literacy Corpsmen and Corpswomen In an effort t extend educational facilities in the remote parts of t country high school graduates are given training for s months in teaching and are dispatched to remote villag which lack schooling facilities. This programme is chosen by the interested draftees in place of military service. They open schools, teach in these schools an also help in the adult literacy compaign.

4. Daneshserai-Rahenumai These institutions train t for the Guidance Cycle. Candidates must hold a high school diploma and also pass the entrance examination specially conducted for these colleges. On completion

the two year full-time courses students are certifi to teach in the Guidance Cycle.

5. Teachers University of Teheran This used to Higher College of Teacher Training until it receive as a university three years ago. Since then its ad requirements are the same as for any other universi completion of the high school diploma and success i special entrance examination. Duration of the degr is normally four years and the successful candidate eligible to teach in secondary schools. This unive runs courses leading to Master's Degree in Guidance Counselling, for teaching at Colleges of teacher tr for the Guidance Cycle and for teaching at the inst for higher educati n.

6. University of Education Corps This universi training courses for graduates who still have to fu military service obligations. They are trained to secondary schools. It also runs courses in educati management and rural development.

7. Faculty of correspondence education of the Educatic University This faculty is responsible for pr access to higher education to the in-service teache the remoter parts of the country through correspond Usual period for the award of a degree from this fa four years. Students attend summer classes as the compulsory requirement for their degree.

8. Faculties of Education in the universities of Iran At present eight faculties of education provide courses in education with various types of education majors. The admission and degree requirements are the same as in other faculties. On completion graduates are certified to teach in secondary schools, and at the teacher training colleges for the guidance cycle. They may also join the education system as guides or counsellors if they have majored in the respective area.

9. The Free University of Iran In order to overcome the manpower shortage in education, this multi-media university has been established which will make use of distance-delivery techniques in imparting higher education. When it becomes functional it will also participate in teacher training programmes for the secondary level teachers.

10. Colleges of technical and vocational teacher training In order to provide teachers for technical and vocational schools special colleges have recently been established. The admission requirements in these colleges are similar to those for the other institutions of higher education. The graduates of these colleges obtain a Bachelor's degree and are certified to teach at technical and vocational schools.

11. Centers for Pre-school teacher training Pre-school education in recent years has attracted considerable attention and the special training centers for teacher training for this sector of education have been established. For a period of training lasting one year the applicants are selected from amongst the high school diploma holders.

12. Teaching staff at university lev l The university teaching staff are selected from amongst the people who have obrained a Doctrate degree in the relevant field. Many of the existing university teachers possess their higher degrees from European or American universities. In the face of the shortage of highly qualified candidates in some cases people with a first class Bachelor's degree are also employed to teach as instructors. In such cases instructors after two years of service are eligible to acquire scholarships for obtaining a higher degree abroad.

13. Retraining courses In-service training programmes of short term duration and many other retraining programmes for the working teachers are held by the Ministry of Education every year. In many cases teachers' promotions and increments in salary are related to attending such retraining programmes.

Over the past few years the Ministry of Education has entered into a special arrangement with some faculties of education at the universities under which the Ministry releases non-degree holder teachers for a period of three to four years to study for their Bachelor's degree. Mainly primary school teachers participate in this programme who are then promoted to teach in the Guidance Cycle or secondary schools.

14. Adult Education Teachers in the employment of the Ministry of Education are often responsible for taking part in adult education. Many teachers who have no experience in adult education go through a special programme and then

participate in adult education. The International Centre for Campaign Against Illiteracy has recently established special centres for training women teachers. Candidates are usually high school diploma holders who teach in the centres for campaign against illiteracy after completeing the training.

f. Conclusion

The economic development of Iran in the recent past and during the last three years in particular has made the authorities, more than before, aware of the shortage of skilled and educated manpower. It is now realised that for an adequate supply of the needed manpower steps should be taken to develop the education system in the required direction.

Consequently, along with the quantitative expansion of educational facilities, an increased attention has been paid to the quality aspect of education. Many changes introduced recently aim at creating the appropriate linkages in the various stages of education. The relationship of secondary education has come under more specific attention: academic secondary education with higher education; general secondary education with the labour market and technical and secondary education with skills needed by the developing economy. Many of these measures have been built into the Sixth Developmental Plan which will become effective in March 1978.

Table number "6" shows the development of various levels of education in quantitative terms. Percentages of growth in various sectors indicate the priority areas in education. It is quite abvious that over this period pre-school education, vocational and technical

education and teacher training and adult education programmes have been accorded higher priorities.

Table '1'

Budget allocation to education for the years 1974-75 and 75-76

(Figures in million Rials $1=70 Rials approx.)

Fiscal year / Budget plan	1974-1975	1975-1976
Total national Budget	1,811,424	2,063,750
Education Budget Percent of total Budget	125,073 6.9%	174,747 8.5%
Teacher Training Percent of Education Budget	7,672 6.9%	15,791 9.0%
Primary Education Percent of Education Budget	33,253 26,6%	48,308 27.7%
Guidance Cycle Percent of Education Budget	14,007 11.2%	20,526 11.7%
Secondary Education Percent of Education Budget	12,251 9,8%	15,771 9.0%
Technical Education Percent of Education Budget	12,780 10.2%	16,838 9.6%
Higher Education percent of Education Budget	20,030 16. %	26,012 14.9%
Adult Education and other Educational programmes Percent of Education Budget	22,737 18. %	29,885 17.1%
University Research Percent of Education Budget	1,343 1.1%	1,617 0.9%
Education Budget as percent of GNP	3.9%	4.3%

Table '2'

Quantitative expansion of students at various levels for the years 1973-74, 1974-75 and 1975-76. (Figures in thousands)

Year / level of Education	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	Increase percent
Pre-school	41	89	175	327
Primary Education	36,646	4,120	4,468	23
Guidance Cycle	906	1,151	1.284	42
Secondary Education:				
Academic	747	667	700	-0,7
Technical/ Vocational	76	133	151	99
Teacher Training	14	20	26	86
Night classes	145	146	179	23
Higher Education	123	135	152	24
Adult Education	24	53	134	458
Literacy Campaign	516	470	533	3
Vocational Literacy	24	31	53	121

Table'3'

Curriculum contents of primary schools

Subjects	Number of hours per week					Total Weekly
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	
Religious and moral Education	2	2	3	3	3	13
Farsi Language and Literature	12	12	9	9	8	50
Arithmethic	3	3	4	4	5	19
General Science and Hygine	2	2	3	3	3	13
Social Studies	2	2	3	3	3	13
Arts and Crafts	5	5	4	4	4	22
Physical Education and sports	2	2	2	2	2	10
Total	28	28	28	28	28	140

Notes:

1. The weekly programme consists of 5 hours per day.
2. Working hours are arranged at 3 hours in the morning and 2 hours in the afternoon.
3. Thursday afternoons are reserved for extra-curricular activities.

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Table '4'

Curriculum contents for the Guidance Cycle (first cycle of secondary education).

Subjects	Number of hours per week			Total hours
	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	
Religious and moral Education	3	3	3	9
Farsi Language and Literature	6	5	5	16
Experimental sciences	5	5	5	15
Vocational and Technical	4	4	4	12
Mathematics	5	5	5	15
Arabic	-	1	1	2
History and Geography & Social Studies	3	3	3	9
Foreign Language	4	4	4	12
Physical Education	2	2	2	6
Fine Arts	2	2	2	6
Total	33	34	34	101

Table '5'

Curriculum contents for the first two years of the secondary schools under the new system (academic stream)

Subject	number of hours per week	
	1st year	2nd year
Religious and moral education	2	2
Farsi language and literatuer	6	6
Foreign language	4	4
Physical Education	3	3
History, Geography and social Studies	5	5
Experimental Sciences	6	6
Mathematics	6	6
Practical arts and crafts	4	4
Total number of hours	36	36

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Table '6'

(a) Requirements for bachelor's Degree

1st year	35	credit hours per week
2nd year	35	"
3rd year	35	"
4th year	35	"
Total	140	Credit hours per week

(b) Distribution of credit requirement

General courses	20	credit hours
Basic courses	20	"
Major courses	48 to 60	"
Minor courses	24 to 30	"
Optional courses	10	credit hours

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1. Iran, Plan and Budget Organization.
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2. Iran, Ministry of Education, Statistics of Education 1974-75 and 1975-76.

3. Iran, Institute for Research and Planning in Science and Education. Statistics of Higher Education 1974-75 and 1975-76.

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